



1938 41617

# SOCIAL ACTION

Published by the Council for Social Action of the  
Congregational and Christian Churches

289 Fourth Avenue

New York City

January 1, 1938

*Editorial Committee:* HUBERT HERRING  
ALFRED SCHMALZ, MARGUERITTE BRO

---

## CONTENTS

THE SECOND MILE . . . . .	3
RACIAL JUSTICE . . . . .	5
CIVIL LIBERTIES . . . . .	8
THE CAMPAIGN FOR WORLD ECONOMIC COOPERATION	11
THE SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAM: FEBRUARY . . . .	12
METROPOLITAN COOPERATIVE . . . . .	14

---

CATHERINE VAN BUREN—pictured on the cover—is a gifted young soprano whose experience with hotel accommodations is told in this issue.

On page 11 of HOW TO READ A NEWSPAPER, by Paul Hutchinson, the headline, "Pro-Hitler Staff at Headquarters of Republicans" should be credited to the *New York Post* instead of the *Times*. We regret the error exceedingly.

SOCIAL ACTION, Volume IV, Number 1, January 1, 1938. Published twice a month, except July and August. Subscription \$1.00 per year; Canada, \$1.40 per year. One to 9 copies, 10c. each; 10 to 49 copies, 7c. each; 50 or more copies, 5c. each. Entered as second-class matter September 15, 1936, at the Post Office at New York, New York under the Act of March 3, 1879.



---

## THE SECOND MILE

---

The amazing thing about starting on the second mile is the discovery that you have already gone the first mile. Whether you started out on that first mile with confidence or took each step with trepidation, it is solid comfort to know that just behind you stretches the whole of the first mile, well run.

Having passed the five-thousand mark on paid single subscriptions, we feel that SOCIAL ACTION has finished its first mile. Our 'reading public' is growing. We have 700 in regular subscribed bundle orders each month. In addition to all subscriptions, we sell from 3,000 to 15,000 of each issue to study classes, discussion groups, men's clubs, missionary societies, libraries, colleges, workers' organizations. Under a working arrangement with the Disciples of Christ, we are now building up a Disciples' file looking toward a joint imprint of the magazine with representatives of that denomination on our editorial and planning committees. The same arrangement is under contemplation by the Presbyterians, who now use 300 copies each month, and by the Northern Baptists. In Iowa, the Congregational-Christian churches are nearing the end of their drive for 1,000 new subscribers. Tennessee and Illinois have set themselves high goals for spring campaigns. From a variety of sources we are receiving picked lists of ministers, professors, laymen who should be interested—all of these lists without solicitation. There are subscribers in every state and in 14 countries.

Definitely, SOCIAL ACTION is starting on its second mile. As far as we know, we have made all the old mistakes of any new staff on a new venture and some new mistakes which we feel certain no one ever made before and we shall never make again. We have tried to feel our way, as sensitive as possible to the needs of the churches and to the task for which the Council for Social Action was created. Some needed services we are not performing for lack of three necessities—more time, more

money, more staff. But as the churches demand more services, those necessities will come.

Since March, 1935, when the magazine was called into being, two pamphlets have been published each month for ten months of the year. Theoretically, one pamphlet each month was a research treatise, the other of more general nature. Actually, when the pressure of events seemed to dictate, there have sometimes been two research pamphlets in a month. Definitely the demand is for more research pamphlets. Therefore, beginning in February, we shall publish but one pamphlet each month, twelve months in the year, all of the pamphlets in the nature of research studies. We hope that our readers will approve the new plan. If not, please let us know. After all, the reader is ultimately the editor.

Our immediate plans include, as the next issue, an analysis of the present Asiatic conflict and the relationship of the United States to it. *AMERICA AND THE FAR EAST*, by Nathaniel Pfeffer. Following that, studies of workers' organization in the Ford plants; the Negro in industry today; the social and economic costs of the liquor traffic; farm prices; and the 64-page *PRIMER OF ECONOMICS* which will be the basis of next fall's economic plebiscite.

*SOCIAL ACTION* should have a constructive place in the life of American churches. It is the only magazine of its kind. Compact, concise, factual—and easy to read. It aims to furnish the facts behind the headlines in order to help the average church member maintain more adequate citizenship in this his democracy, in this his Kingdom of Heaven. Intelligent understanding of the social-economic issues of our day is not easy to come by. We cannot, most of us, become specialists. But since we must provide a measure of answer to these problems through our votes, our taxes, our share of public opinion, it is well to be informed. *SOCIAL ACTION* attempts to state the long-time religious values of the 'abundant life' in terms of its immediate, first-hand problems.

M.H.B.



## Racial Justice

*("February 13, is Race Relations Sunday")*

Those who say that racial justice will come 'in time' mean usually that they are leaving such justice to someone else. True, there are social and economic movements under way which in themselves will help to force justice. Many of the present labor organization campaigns are such a force depending, as they do, upon the membership of whites and Negroes without discrimination. There are also, in many parts of this land, individuals and groups of individuals doing significant and inconspicuous things in behalf of civil justice, social equality, Christian brotherhood.

We quote from a letter from Donald A. Hyde, Minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Shawnee, Oklahoma. The letter was significant in the fact that Mr. Hyde made no mention of his own untiring effort, his insistent determination and his adroit inventiveness in handling a seemingly impossible situation.

"Gaunt-faced, pot-bellied little Negro children playing in the streets, four and five people crowded into one-room shacks, typhoid fever striking down helpless, emaciated infants, city water service disconnected because of non-payment of bills forcing the use of water from a nearby streamlet, no park facilities, and 155 outdoor shanties called toilets, most of which were so open that they could not be used in daylight, and the school had to close its windows when warm weather came because of the stench—these are some of the conditions discovered in the Negro section of oil-soaked, prosperous, complacent and churchly Shawnee, Oklahoma.

"A typical American scene: Maddening poverty with its devastation, economic insecurity and actual want always present, and, on the other side of town, lovely homes, large incomes, abundance of everything. Could anything be done about

it? Could a southwestern community noted for its provincialism, its lethargy, and broad hospitality, be awakened to the need?

"It was obvious that community sanitation was the most imperative need. The Negro community needed decent toilets. The United States Public Health authorities were consulted but, because of the lack of enforcement of local sanitation ordinances, did not wish to precipitate friction, yet assisted in every way possible. The WPA was consulted and approved a project furnishing labor free.

"But there was no money to purchase materials. A unit cost was \$18.00 for materials alone. The Negroes could not furnish credit, and had no money. Some of the older citizens thought the Negroes had lived for years under existing conditions, why bother them now, 'after all they are only niggers, aren't they?'—little heaps of dirt on top of the ground in cemeteries bore mute testimony to the efficacy of the 'let-alone' policy.

"The local radio station refused to permit a broadcast on the ground that the phraseology would be objectionable, but when attention was called to the use of the word 'syphilis' in the current campaign against social diseases, hesitating approval was granted, provided the word 'toilet' should not be used in the broadcast. Then the civic clubs, Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions, were approached, the situation explained and money asked. Every business enterprise in the community was approached and all gave. In two weeks \$700 had been collected and the work started.

"Six months have witnessed the following developments in the Negro section:

"Sanitation: One hundred and twenty U. S. Public Health approved toilets have been placed in the safest places, and every penny of the material paid for; the Negroes are paying for their units with dimes, quarters, and dollars; thirty more units will complete the task.



"Community organization: A branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has been organized, and this group is undertaking an aggressive program for creating and enhancing self-respect among the Negroes. This group has assisted in every way with the program of betterment.

"Library: Through the splendid cooperation of the local branch of the American Association of University Women, a library will begin serving the Negroes within a short time. Approximately 500 high-class volumes have been secured, rental money for one year made available and the NYA will furnish a worker free. Some money has been donated for subscriptions to worthwhile periodicals.

"Diagnostic clinic: Permission has been granted for the establishment of a clinic for diagnosis of social diseases, blood tests being done free by the state, and treatment provided free by local physicians.

"Park: The local School Board unanimously voted to purchase a park and provide adequate equipment. This will be done through using a part of the tax money allotted for Negro education, which is unused at present.

"These achievements have required one year. A housing project is under consideration, and ways and means are being considered to make possible more economic goods for these people."

---

From Portland, Oregon: "You will be interested to know that the Council for Social Action of the First Congregational Church is cooperating with the committee on rents and housing. An account of the hearing before the city council is given in the enclosed newspaper clippings."

The Evangelical Women's Union, St. Louis, Missouri, has ordered 500 copies each of *SOCIAL ACTION*, *Christianity and the Cooperatives*, *Changing Rural America*.

---

From Memphis, Tennessee: "Although I am a member of the Unitarian church, I find your plainly written, simple and factual bulletin of inestimable value."

## Civil Liberties

The following letter from Herbert D. Rugg to Allan Knight Chalmers tells its own story.

Catherine Van Buren is the foremost lyric soprano of a race noted for its musical endowment and is one of the great sopranos of our time . . . . Guest soloist for the Oberlin A Capella Choir . . . singing at concerts in Symphony Hall, Boston, Carnegie Hall, New York City.

"Regarding my experience concerning hotel accommodations for Miss Van Buren in New York City:

"Having recently had positive and definite refusal from such hotels as the Parkside, George Washington, and the Prince George, to accept a Negro as a guest, I did not endeavor to secure a room for her in a hotel.

"I called the Commodore to ask if it would be all right if I should take her there for luncheon. An assistant manager said they would serve us in a private room. Mentioning the Civil Rights Law to him, he said we could go into the dining room, but it would be at our own risk and the hotel would not be responsible for what other guests might do. I considered that this was a very unsatisfactory attitude on the part of the hotel. If a white woman should be insulted, the hotel would certainly use the fullest means possible to protect her; the hotel indicated no intention of doing likewise for a Negro woman.

"Having heard from my sister, who has been president of the Oberlin Chapter of the American Association of University Women, that transient accommodations for college alumnae could be secured at the Women's University Club through the American Association, I phoned the New York headquarters of the Association which are at the quarters of the New York Chapter in Rockefeller Center. The secretary who answered the phone upon being informed that I wished a room for an Oberlin graduate said they would be delighted to arrange it; the treasurer of the New York chapter holds a membership in the Club and would send Miss Van Buren a guest card. I re-



ceived a letter to this effect. I was also informed that the president of the New York chapter was an Oberlin graduate. I phoned back and remarked that Oberlin had Japanese and Chinese students and sometimes there were occasions when we might wish to secure a room for a Chinese or Japanese graduate. I was assured that the University Club would be delighted to have a Japanese or Chinese graduate stay there. Then I remarked that Oberlin also had colored students and that Miss Van Buren was a Negro. I was told immediately that that made a difference. In fact, the effort was made to make me feel that I had insulted them by trying to get a guest card for Miss Van Buren. I replied, however, that I had not yet received a card for her, that I was informing them of the fact of her race and that I was interested to find out that they drew a sharp line in the matter and that I rather wondered at the liberty they took to discriminate in such an arbitrary way concerning the graduates of such a school as Oberlin. I was then informed that this discrimination was a discrimination of the Club and that the New York Chapter of the American Association which did not itself have rooms or a restaurant but did hold afternoon teas and other social gatherings, did not discriminate.

"I went to the housing secretary of the New York City Y.W.C.A. From her I learned that the residences of the city "Y" were on a positively segregated basis, and that colored women were only admitted to the Harlem residence. They were not even allowed to have rooms at residences which were characterized by the variety of nationalities and races represented. The secretary assured me, however, that a most kindly feeling was held towards the Negro race and in evidence of that said that they employed Negro help in the cafeteria and as porters, indicating some men who were then mopping the floor.

"Then I went to the office of The Residence of the National Board of the Y.W.C.A. Here I met with a very cordial re-

sponse to my inquiry for a room for Miss Van Buren and the information was volunteered that on account of the difficulty that colored women have in obtaining accommodations in the city, they took particular pains to make them feel welcome. A room has been reserved in The Residence for Miss Van Buren during the two weeks she will be here.

---

"Yesterday afternoon there was a conference called by Dr. Cavert upon the request of the executive committee of the Congregational Board of Home Missions. Mr. Ledbetter of Charleston, S. C., is one of the twenty-one members of the executive committee. The Parkside has refused to treat him like the other members of the Committee, that is, it will not let him have a room nor permit him to eat in the public dining room."

---

From Frank Rawlinson, Editor *The Chinese Recorder*, Shanghai: "Various copies of SOCIAL ACTION have also come to hand. These I have read with a great deal of interest. I hope you will continue to send me this very valuable publication."

---

#### Dr. Rawlinson of China is War Casualty

The madness and tragedy of war are epitomized in the death from a Chinese bomb last Saturday in Shanghai of Dr. Frank J. Rawlinson, editor of the *Chinese Recorder* and leading missionary in China for more than thirty years, and Robert Karl Reischauer, born and reared in Japan and a lecturer in Japanese subjects at Princeton University. There is a certain ghastly appropriateness in the fact that of the first three American casualties of the Sino-Japanese war one should be a distinguished and devoted friend of China, and another an almost equally distinguished and devoted lover of Japan. That the bomb was dropped by accident—whether because the aim of the pilot was defective or because he had been wounded and his plane damaged—only adds to the irony of the tragic episode. It is doubtful where Frank Rawlinson will be more deeply mourned, here or in the land which he had so thoroughly adopted as his own. He had become from every point of view one of the most useful men in China. . . . Rawlinson's scholarship was of the sort that kept him in close touch with the life of the Chinese nation and aware of and informed about her problems.

(Excerpt from *The Christian Century*, August 25, 1937)



# The Campaign for World Economic Cooperation

*Listen in!*

The campaign for World Economic Cooperation will culminate in a national conference in Washington, D. C. early in the spring. At that time a specific program for peaceful economic change will be formulated. Meanwhile the essential task is to create a public opinion, in church and community, which is informed about the world's economic ills and sympathetic to the need for change. Only such a public opinion can support the government in a foreign policy which will make for peace rather than war.

Those who have not already purchased the basic handbook of the campaign—"Peaceful Change: The Alternative to War" may still secure it through our office (10c. plus 5c. postage). We have gathered together a packet on World Economic Cooperation containing about a dozen pamphlets and leaflets on different phases of the campaign; foreign policy, the farmer's stake, tariffs, etc., also information about available motion pictures, stereopticon slides, posters, world trade maps, world interdependence exhibits. Price 10c.

Broadcasts are made every other Sunday afternoon, at 2:00 P.M., E.S.T., over the Columbia Broadcasting System. Organize a "listening in" group. Broadcasts after January 9, when youth leaders will speak on an international hook-up, will deal with such subjects as: Labor, Agriculture, Currency Stabilization, Raw Materials.

---

## *Out of the Mouth of Babes*

The children of the church school of the First Unitarian Church in Erie, Pennsylvania, celebrated Christmas in a unique manner during the recent holidays. They drew up a Peace Manifesto which they urged the children of all the Erie church schools to sign and which was then forwarded to the Senators and the Congressman of the region. At the Christmas party, Santa himself had each child sign as he came forward for his gifts. (*No Frontier News Service*, January 25, 1937)

# The Social Action Program: February

## THE ECONOMIC PLEBISCITE

With 1938 under way, the Economic Plebiscite definitely becomes the major social action project in our churches. The balloting will be done in the fall, but the preliminary education begins now.

We are inviting pastors to cooperate with us in this way: Let us send you now the list of questions as at present formulated. You agree to call together a group of men and women to discuss them, with the central purpose of helping us to put them into better and final form. We will provide you, for educational purposes, with a list of pamphlets and other study materials easily accessible and very usable, gathered around the six areas under discussion: Unemployment and Relief, Agricultural Prices, Labor Organization, Public Utilities, Tariffs, Cooperatives. As each chapter of the manuscript is completed, we shall send it to you in mimeographed form, to share with your group, asking them to make comments upon it and to suggest changes. Thus, you will help us to write the primer.

This small group will be your working committee. But you can also undertake education for a larger group. Take any one of the subjects—in the form of our questions perhaps—and set up a meeting to discuss that specific problem. You can do this for a program in any organized group: women's association, men's club, young people's society.

There are different ways of setting up programs in order to reach different groups and satisfy varied mental appetites. First, the forum. This type of meeting can often best be held after a church supper. A speaker invited from such organizations as the chamber of commerce, the grange, a labor union, a cooperative; after the talk, the audience asks questions.

Second, the panel discussion. Choose your subject—perhaps from such topics as these: Should workers be encouraged to organize into labor unions? Should the federal government be



responsible for the level of agricultural prices? Should national economic independence be encouraged by high tariffs? Select persons who have definite opinions on the question to be discussed and who can carry on animated conversation. Pick an alert and informed chairman, who will plan the meeting thoroughly. When the meeting is called to order, he introduces the subject briefly, and then asks the participants to make their comments. He tries to get them into argument. He shifts the interest from one to another of the members of the panel, so that each has his say. After an hour or so, he calls the discussion off, briefly summarizes some of the agreements and disagreements, and then invites questions from the floor.

Third, there is the debate. This is especially useful if you can find two well-balanced persons of sharply opposed opinions. Give them a subject, carefully phrased, and let them speak. When the speaking is done, invite questions from the floor.

Fourth, there is the small discussion group. Organize at least one such group, composed of people who will make a special and careful study of the plebiscite materials. Into this group you may wish to bring some of your Church School teachers, especially the leaders of adult classes, and other laymen who can help you throughout the year in keeping the plebiscite before the church. From this group you may later be able to form a Social Action Committee, if your church does not already have such a committee.

### THE PRIMER OF ECONOMICS

Textbook for the Economic Plebiscite has been postponed until the April issue of *Social Action* in order to allow more time for the criticism of experts and for trying-out in such churches as wish to form a laboratory group for testing the various chapters as they are released in mimeographed form. If your church will form such a group, write to us for further information.

## Metropolitan Cooperative

From *C.S.R. Topics*, published by the Council on Social Relations of New York's Broadway Tabernacle Church, Allan Knight Chalmers, minister, Jeremiah P. Edwards, Chairman, executive committee:

"If you want to hear a story about some real social action just ask one of the Tabernacle people, who live in Knickerbocker Village, about the cooperative there. You will hear how Mr. and Mrs. Harold Hatcher collected a few friends whom Mrs. Hatcher had met on "Baby Carriage Row" a couple of years ago; how they held some informal meetings in their apartment to discuss "co-ops"; how they finally organized a cooperative with 35 members who took 50 bottles of milk a day; how distribution was on a volunteer basis which meant someone's getting up at five o'clock to make deliveries; how the organization grew to 125 members with an employed delivery clerk and a dozen products, and now has 240 members, a store room with many products, regular business hours, a full time manager and two full time clerks. Nor has the cooperative limited itself to groceries. It also has a collective bargaining contract with a laundry and there is an associated Federal Credit Union. We hear it is the only organization in the "Village" which has a thoroughly representative mixture of Jews, Catholics, Protestants, and "free thinkers." If you fear it may not be financially sound ask George Vyverberg, its volunteer treasurer. He will tell you that its volume is now about \$2,000.00 a month and that in its existence it has paid patronage dividends of over \$1,000. If you question the competence of the management, ask the Sneeds about the background of the man who is running it today. We hear he was a City Manager and a Cooperative Manager in Germany. Here is human brotherhood in action!"

---

## Another Cooperative Laboratory

From the Cooperative Consumer, Kansas City, Missouri: "Probably the first Cooperative store ever to be conducted in connection with a Young People's Conference in the Middle West was in operation here at the time of the United Older Youth Conference at Doane College.

"The conference was made up of young people of college age from nine denominations of the state. Rev. E. C. Ford, of Grand Island, taught a seminar on cooperation and in connection with this course conducted a store on the campus for the sale of candy, ice cream, and stationery. This little store was run on strictly cooperative principles.



"Eighty-three of the students and faculty took out shares at 15c. each, giving a total capital of \$12.45. Supplies were purchased from a cooperative wholesale. The store was operated for five days and \$30.85 worth of business was done, and on this a gross profit of \$9.50 was made. After deducting the necessary expenses, a ten per cent patronage dividend was declared."

## Posters

Posters are not a new invention. But they are one of the older inventions whose usefulness has not worn out. Human nature is still such that the eye is attracted to a pictorial, succinct presentation of an interesting fact.

The Council for Social Action needs some good posters. Perhaps some church has an artist who would like to contribute a really interesting idea for posters presenting: SOCIAL ACTION magazine; our general packet material—Housing, Rural Life, World Peace; a really grand temperance poster. Either black-and-white or colored posters. Small posters and large posters. Suggestions most cordially received.

For the individual church bulletin we suggest that the local social action committee make use of the cartoons, graphs and pictures appearing in various issues of SOCIAL ACTION magazine. These pictures can be quickly mounted on colored cardboard, two or three salient facts penned beneath them, and the poster hung on a bulletin board where it will catch the eye.

The National Forum (a Non-partisan Movement for Social Education, 830 East 56th Street, Chicago, Illinois) publishes the best books of colored charts and graphs which we have seen. These loose-leaf books contain ten posters each and sell for seventy cents. There are six books available besides many special charts. Among the books are: INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS VISUALIZED, ECONOMIC PROBLEMS VISUALIZED, COOPERATION VISUALIZED, FARM PROBLEMS VISUALIZED, HEALTH PROBLEMS VISUALIZED, SPECIAL PROBLEMS VISUALIZED. These books can be ordered directly from the National Forum or from the Council for Social Action. There are also sets of large charts, three by four feet in size, and high quality colored lantern slides of practically the entire list.

---

From Central Congregational Church, New Orleans: "Next to *Survey Graphic*, I consider SOCIAL ACTION the best medium for information on social issues in America. I have just covered your recent number "The Home in Transition." I have decided to use it in my class in Modern Ethical Problems at Dillard University."

## The Silkworm's Protest

I am a silkworm and have no nationality. I live on mulberries and mumble an Esperanto of service. I believe in beauty and utility and labor mightily to clothe the limbs of ladies in London, Cairo, Buenos Aires, Budapest and Brooklyn.

This is true internationalism. If we silkworms toiled only for Tokio we would stand condemned as narrow nationalists, and no self-respecting insect with a world vision would have anything to do with us.

We silkworms, busily spinning for fashion rightness, bulge a cosmic eye while thinking of ladies' limbs across the seas. The silkworm, it might be said, labors for the leg of nations.

True enough, most of us silkworms abide in Japan, where the cost of our tending is cheap, but if you asked us silkworms we'd reply that we'd just as soon live in Canton or Chicago. But we happen by sheer accident of birth to be living in Japan.

This is, indeed, fortunate for the Japanese, because the profits from exporting the raw product of us silkworms runs into many millions of dollars yearly.

Most of these many millions Japan is now spending on armies and armaments and bombing planes, which are the finished product of the silkworm.

The bombing planes, having a Japanese nationality, should cause distress to us silkworms without nationality. But I reason in this fashion:

As a respectable insect without a nationality I shouldn't be spinning Japanese bombing planes. And yet, in a way, Japanese bombing planes are also international-minded. They blow up and kill or injure not only Chinese but bystanders like Yanks and Englishmen, with an "Oh, so sorry, honorable sirs and gentlemen. Please excuse."

Therefore, I reason, they play no favorites, and I shall continue to spin bombing planes for the greater glory of internationalism.

And yet I am cursed with a conscience, sheer as the silk which I produce, and sometimes meditating on my mulberry bush I wonder: Do the lovely ladies across the seas, when they dress in the morning, clothe themselves in silk or in the bones and blood of dead Chinese?

(Excerpt from the column of Ernest L. Meyer in the NEW YORK POST for November 3, 1937.)